

signals shortage of experienced teachers and research scientists in future;

- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government have decided to form a National Mission for Technology Education, in order to fill the gap between demand and supply of technology specialists; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and by when the above mission is likely to be constituted?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) Due to rapid expansion of Technical Education Sector and availability of other attractive alternatives, it has been generally noticed that young bright students are showing lesser interest in science education globally. Efforts are being made to ensure that the students continue to get attracted to science education and scientific research so that there is no shortage of experienced science teachers and research scientists in future.

Prime Minister of India in his speech on 19th January, 2001 announced that the Government of India would soon set up a National Mission for Technology Education to increase the number of highly trained professionals in Information Technology and other areas of Engineering and Management.

Department of Vedic Astrology in Universities

3897. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether University Grants Commission has decided to start Departments of Vedic Astrology in universities offering certificate, diploma, degree and doctoral courses in Jyoti Vigyan, from next academic year, and has issued a circular inviting, universities to submit proposals for starting such departments and course;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the proposal and circular have invoked strong

resentment among country's scientific community, institutions and leading academicians;

- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether Government propose to intervene in the matter; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (f) Yes, Sir. The University Grants Commission *vide* its letter dated 23.2.2001 has informed all Universities receiving financial assistance about the decision of the Commission for setting up of a few Departments of Vedic Astrology in Indian Universities. This would provide teaching and training in the subject leading to the certificate, diploma, undergraduate, post-graduate and Ph.D. degrees. The UGC has also invited proposals from interested universities to start the course from the academic session 2001-2002. The introduction of the course has occasioned some debate in the press.

Clearance for Engineering Colleges in A.P.

3898. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the guidelines and principles followed by AICTE before granting permission for setting up or opening an engineering college;
- (b) the number of such requests received from Andhra Pradesh during last two years and the number of clearances given, year-wise; and
- (c) the reasons for delay in clearing the remaining applications?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has notified guidelines for granting approval for starting new technical institutions, which *inter alia*, includes conditions on fulfilment of financial soundness, availability of technical manpower, compliance of admission procedure/charging of fees, availability of infrastructure facilities like land, building, class room, etc.